GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2306
ANSWERED ON:23.08.2013
RETINA TREATMENT
Gowda Shri D.B. Chandre

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether costly injections like Lucentis, Avastin and Macugen are being frequently prescribed or used for retina treatment all over the country particularly in Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Opthalmic Sciences, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi;

(b) if so, whether the use of these costly injections is approved by the Medical Council of India or these are being used on trial basis on the patients in India;

(c) if so, the facts in this regard;

(d) whether due to excessive use of such injections, a large number of patients have reportedly lost their vision in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken/proposed by the Government to arrange for affordable and effective treatment of retina patients?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a): to (c): According to All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, anti Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (anti-VEGF) injection often remain the mainstay of treatment for blinding retinal disorders like Diabetic Macular Edema (EME), wet age related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Retinal Vein Occlusion etc. The vision of the patients suffering with these diseases and related disorders, improves by giving anti VEGF injection, namely injection Lucentis, injection Avastin or injection Macugen, which may need to be repeated for optimal treatment. Use of the anti VEGF injection for treatment of retinal diseases has been approved by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), which is the regulatory body for introduction of new drugs.

(d) & (e): All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi informed that it is not true that repeated injection causes visual loss. However, it may actually improve the vision of the patient. Rarely, in less than 0.1-0.2% eyes, infection within the eye could occur, which is then effectively managed by the Ophthalmologist concerned. These injections are expensive, but with CGHS,ECHS (Armed Forces) and other Government and semi autonomous bodies, complete reimbursement is provided to the suffering patients. Also patients with health insurance get it reimbursed from the Insurance Company.